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*British Northern Colonies.*

**T**HIS is the third time the Sugar Islanders have endeavoured to induce the *British* Parliament to pass an Act under specious Pretences, that in its Consequence can only tend to raise the Sugar Planters, upon the Ruins of its Sister Colonies, and at the Expence of *Great Britain* itself.

By the first Act, brought in the Sessions before last, (and which, had it not been for your Lordships Goodness, was endeavour'd by the Sugar Islanders to have been passed, before the Northern Colonies had any Opportunity of knowing any thing at all of the Matter) the Sugar Planters were so modest in their Request, as to ask, amongst other things, an express Prohibition of the Vent of the Northern Colonies superfluous Lumber and Horses, under the Pretence that it enabled the *French* to under-sell us.

The Northern Colonies supply our Sugar Plantations with as much Lumber, *viz.* Boards, Planks, and Timber for Buildings, Hogsheads, Staves, Hoops, and Horses, and Provisions, as they want, or will ever take off, and in Return take their Rum, Sugar, and Melasses, as much as they will give them.

And then are forced to apply to the *Dutch* and *French* Sugar Islanders, to take off their Surplus, which is in prodigious Quantities.

It has been fully proved, that our Sugar Colonies had as much as they would take off, that they had it cheaper than the *French* and *Dutch*, and that the *French* and *Dutch* could supply themselves elsewhere; that our own Sugar Islands could not supply the Northern Colonies with half what they want, or take off half what they have to sell.

How groundless, therefore, are the Sugar Planters in their Suggestions, and unreasonable in their Desires, to restrain a People from the Vent of the Produce of their Land and Industry, or to expect the Mother Country should do to partial an Act against a Colony equally hers, and in a Point (as the Lumber Trade is) that does not any ways interfere with *Great Britain*; but on the contrary, is certainly a great Means of diverting the Northern Colonies from falling into our *British* Manufactures.

The Sugar Islanders, seeing the Unreasonableness of this their Attempt fully exposed, were ashamed in their next Application to insert that Clause, and so, that being left out, the Bill was then brought in the last Sessions, for prohibiting the Northern Colonies from taking any Sugars, Rum or Melasses, in Return from the *Dutch* and *French* Sugar Islands.

This was shewn to amount to the same thing in Effect, as a Prohibition of the Vent of the Northern Colonies superfluous Product.

For if the Northern Colonies were not to take the Produce of the *Dutch* and *French* Sugar Islands, in Return, the natural Consequence would be, that they would not take our Produce, it being impossible to carry on the Trade, without bartering of Product, or to expect Silver or Money from the *French* and *Dutch*, who have it not in any Proportion to give us, and who therefore would be put upon supplying themselves elsewhere (as it was fully shewed they could) with every thing they now take from us. Can it be politick to put the *French* and *Dutch* upon supplying themselves elsewhere, while we can have the Benefit of supplying them?

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'This must be attended with the Loss of the surplus Product of our Northern Colonies, which would then lie dead and profitless.

There are near 300 Sail of Vessels employ'd by us in this Trade, between our Northern Colonies and the *French* and *Dutch* Settlements, for we are the Carriers both forwards and backwards; and what a great Advantage that is, is obvious to every Eye; all this must be lost, all those Ships, all those Sailors turn'd adrift, and as the Loss would be to us, so would the Acquisition be to some Foreign Power.

The vast Fishery carried on in the Northern Colonies, would be very much prejudiced for want of a Vent of their surplus refuse Fish, which is in so large Quantities, that a losing Voyage with the best Fish, has been often made a saving one, by the worst Sort's being taken off by the *French* and *Dutch*, and which otherwise there would be no Vent for.

Can that be doubted to be an advantageous Trade, that takes off our surplus Product? No Country can be Losers by a Trade that takes off its Product; a Product that otherwise must be a dead Loss, and we the Carriers backwards and forwards.

Surely it is one of the chief things to be studied by a Mother Country, to keep her Colonies as much as possible from interfering with our Manufactures at home, and nothing can do this so effectually, as Diversions to other Branches of Trade.

Many Thousands are employ'd in this Trade, between the Northern Colonies and the *French* and *Dutch* Settlements; these Hands must turn themselves to something, the Northern Colonies have the Materials to form many of the *British* Manufactures; surely they should, by all possible Means, be diverted from it, but they'll be forced upon it, in a great measure, if this Act should pass; for if they are restrained from this, which is the chief Trade of some of the Northern Colonies, they will not be able, in any other Way, to make Returns to *England*, to pay for Manufactures from thence, a Trade, the Balance whereof is greatly in Favour of *Great Britain*, which is not the Case between *Great Britain* and the Sugar Islands.

As it is impossible for the *French* and *Dutch* Sugar Islands to take off our surplus Commodities, without our taking their Product in Return, our Northern Colonies take Care to have that that may be most beneficial to us, *viz.* Melasses, which we have then the Manufacturing of into Rum ourselves, the Demand for which is very great in those large cold Countries, and prodigious Quantities are used in the Fisheries; and the *Indians* that lie behind them, insist upon having it, together with the *English* Woollen Manufacture, in Return for Beaver Skins, Furs, and all that Peltry, by which it is, that the Improvement of the Manufacture of Hats in *Great Britain* is raised to so great a Height.

Our Plantations cannot supply the Northern Colonies with the Melasses and Rum they consume. It is certain we now take from them all we can get; but supposing there were a Possibility of Supply, yet we shall not be able to take so great Quantities from them as we want, because they cannot take off the surplus Product that we now sell the *Dutch* and *French*, by which Means only we are enabled to pay for the Rum and Melasses we necessarily require. Besides, as our Sugar Colonies are known to fail in dry Summers, it would be the highest Injury in the World to deny them the Liberty of supplying themselves elsewhere.

*Barbados* used formerly to trade with the *French* and *Dutch*, and by taking off their Sugars, prevented their seeking out for other Markets. They got, by this Means, the Sugar Trade almost entirely into their own Hands, or, at least, had made themselves the common Channel of that Trade. But,

In 1715. they thought fit to lay a Duty upon the *French* and *Dutch* Sugars and Melasses, and, by that Means, lost that Trade entirely, excepting what is carried on clandestinely.

The same must follow, if this Bill should pass with respect to the Trade between the Northern Colonies and the *Dutch* and *French* Settlements.

It will put the *French* upon encreasing the Manufacturing their Melasses into Rum, which they now do in great Quantities at *Martinico*, &c. and frequently sell

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at Sea to our Fishermen; and will, if this Bill should pass, supply the *Indians*, and work us out of that Trade.

There can be no Doubt, that it is better for this Nation to have her Colonies take Melasses, which they pay for in superfluous Lumber, and manufacture it into Rum, than to buy *French Brandy*, a Commodity wholly of *French Manufacture*, and paid for with Money.

The entire Supply from our Islands to the Northern Colonies of Rum, if it were practicable, must leave none to be sent to *Europe*; and if, to enable them to make the more Rum, the rest of the Islands should take Example by *Barbados*, and clay and refine their Sugars as much as the *Barbadians* have done for some Years past, there cannot possibly come to *England* near the Quantity of Sugars there now does, the natural Consequence of which is easily foreseen, and will be very sensibly felt, both by the Navigation and his Majesty's Revenue.

It was plainly made appear (nay could not be denied by several of their own Witnesses upon their cross Examination) that the View of the Sugar Planters was to raise their Price upon us, kept up but too high already for foreign Markets; so instead of endeavouring to recover the foreign Trade, which is the greatest Concern to *England*, they would force a Price by a Law upon their Mother Country and Sister Colonies, and drain Riches thence. As, if *Bristol* was to be enrich'd at the Expence of *London*; what Advantage, what Acquisition of new Riches would that be to the Kingdom? But our Sugar Planters don't seem to care; let the foreign Trade be lost. If they sell less, provided they can have their own Price, it will answer their End as well, come whence it will.

Upon these Considerations, and for many other Reasons laid before your Lordships the last Sessions, and upon hearing of all Parties, and examining many Witnesses, upon the fullest Evidence on all Sides, and nicest canvassing into the Affair, your Lordships thought proper to drop the Bill.

Notwithstanding which, now a third Time a Bill is brought in for just the same Thing, in a different Dress. Instead of a Prohibition, it is turned into a nominal Duty; but amounts to as effectual a Prohibition, as if it had been so in Words, as may be easily seen throughout the whole Tenor of the Bill.

For Instance; in Melasses (which is the chief Thing the Northern Colonies take, as we get the Manufactory of that into Rum ourselves) the Duty by this Bill laid on it amounts to Two hundred *per Cent.* on the prime Cost.

And it is worth while to consider what this Duty may amount to. *New-England* alone gets above Twenty thousand Hogsheads of Melasses from the *Dutch* and *French* every Year, besides what our own Settlements will let them have, in Return for the Lumber, &c. they take; each Hogshead contains about 100 Gallons, which, at Six-pence *per Gallon*, the Duty proposed, amounts to 50000 *l. Sterl. per Ann.* on this one Article in that single Colony, where the Difference of Exchange is three for one.

And in order to make it a more effectual Prohibition, it is required to be paid in Silver; whereas it is well known, there is no Currency of Silver nor Gold; but, on the contrary, the small Quantity that is brought there, is bought and sold as Merchandise, and sent to *England* towards Payment for the Manufactures they take from hence; and Bills of Credit are their only Currency, which are limited to 30000 *l.* their Money.

It is mere disputing upon Words to say, this Act is not the same as that the last Sessions; for as the Duty is so high, that the Trade can't be carried on under it, and the Manner of Payment is impossible to be complied with, it is as effectual a Prohibition as if it was in express Words. It is certainly meant so to be, so that the very same Thing that was the last Sessions, upon the fullest Evidence, and solemnest Consideration, not thought proper to be granted, is now to force its Way under the Notion of a Duty; a Method, which, it is humbly presumed, will not be endured by your Lordships: And if, by changing the Dress, Things are to be brought on thus, Session after Session, when the Merits of the Question have been so fairly discussed, there will never be any End.

*Wherefore it is humbly hoped, it will not be thought proper to pass this Bill.*

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